
A New Year

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Stimulate the Economy

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The stimulus package agreed on by the White House and Congressional leadership puts money back into the pockets of hardworking Americans through broad-based tax relief, and it does so without creating new government bureaucracy or billions in unnecessary new spending. That is why I supported its passage.

An important component of the package encourages American companies to invest in their own businesses and in our economy by offering a 50% bonus depreciation on certain machinery and equipment. I have continuously championed this type of stimulus, because it has a proven track record. The bonus depreciation provisions that were included in the "Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003" enhanced productivity of American businesses, boosted job creation, and led to a steady rise in the growth of the economy over the last five years.

The best way to stimulate our economy and to weather this current storm is to build on the principles of lower taxes, less government regulation, and economic incentives for American businesses. I hope that the final stimulus package adheres to those principles.

Secure the Border

At the end of 2007, the President signed into law an omnibus spending bill that included provisions added at the last minute, which will dramatically weaken our ability to secure the border and stop the flow of illegal immigrants and potential enemies entering our country. As a staunch supporter of a secure-the-border first immigration policy, I joined over 100 of my House Republican colleagues in sending a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi requesting that the contentious language included in the omnibus spending bill be removed.

The language undermines important parts of the Secure Fence Act which became law in 2006. The Secure Fence Act contains important requirements and guidelines for the construction of fences along the southern border. It mandates the use of double-layered fencing and outlines specific construction zones and benchmarks to be used.

The American people have been loud and clear about their disappointment with the lack of action on the part of the Federal government to secure our borders. Past Congresses and President Bush have made improvements along the border with the increase in border agents and bringing an end to the policy of 'catch and release'. However, there is a substantial need for a physical as well as technologically advanced border fence to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants across our borders. This will ensure that our enemies do not use border loopholes to enter the country and harm American families.

For a copy of the letter sent to Speaker Nance Pelosi, [click here](#).

State of the Union

On January 28th, President Bush delivered his seventh and final State of the Union address, and he outlined a strong agenda for the upcoming year. He made clear that our nation faces many challenges at home and abroad, and that we must address these difficulties in a bipartisan manner.

The President focused attention on high prices at the pump, limited access to affordable health care, and a slowing economy. I share President Bush's support for solutions to these challenges that will garner bipartisan support and remain dedicated to free market principles. The federal government has a role to play, but it should be limited and focused on supporting the strengths and ingenuity of the American people and American businesses.

Between wasteful pork spending and the runaway costs of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, future generations face a bill they will not be able to pay. It is incumbent upon Congress to make the tough decisions now and not kick these problems further down the road. I was pleased that President Bush reiterated his support for the type of sound, principled earmark reforms and spending restraint many of us in Congress continue to champion.

President Bush made it clear that his primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of American families. The hard work of our brave men and women in uniform has fostered significant security improvements in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet, there remains much to be done. We can honor their sacrifices by making sure we remain cognizant of the very real, dangerous, and long-term consequences of failure or defeat.

Above all, I remain proud to stand with President Bush in voicing my support for accountability in Washington. I am optimistic about the great potential our nation has to meet the challenges of our time.